



Date: Tuesday, March 14, 2023

To: Vermont House Committee on Appropriations

From: Drake Turner, Government Relations Director, Let's Grow Kids

Re: Child Care and the Governor's Recommended Fiscal Year 2024 Budget

Thank you for your attention to child care issues as your committee considers recommendations for the state fiscal year 2024 budget process. The Legislature has made crucial investments over the past few years that have helped to preserve Vermont's child care system, but despite this work our system remains in acute crisis. Long-term public investment is needed to realize the goals of Act 45 of 2021: an early childhood education system in which all families can access child care, no family spends more than 10% of their income on care, and early educators are well compensated and supported to do their critical work. We look forward to continuing our work together to realize a child care system that truly works for Vermont's children, families, early educators, programs, and employers.

The Senate and House have recently introduced child care legislation, S.56 and H.208, and S.56 is currently under consideration in the Senate Health and Welfare and Senate Education Committees. **As you craft the House version of the FY24 budget, Let's Grow Kids requests that you support the following investments in the Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP), as proposed by the Governor and recommended by the House Committee on Human Services:**

Section	Agency/Dept	Appropriation	Proposal	Amount (all funds)
B.318	DCF	Child Development	Staffing and operating for Child Care initiatives	\$526,072
B.318	DCF	Child Development	Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) Equity Payments	\$4,968,544
B.318	DCF	Child Development	CCFAP 400% Expansion	\$41,494,292
B.318	DCF	Child Development	CCFAP 400% Eligibility & Referral Contracts	\$2,000,000
B.318	DCF	Child Development	CIS Utilization Increase	\$950,830
			Total	\$49,939,738

We know that as S.56 proceeds, more funding will certainly be needed, but the Governor's recommended investments are an essential foundation from which to build the child care system Vermonters need, and we urge you to include them in the FY24 budget. Your colleagues on the Human Services Committee did excellent, thoughtful work in crafting their recommendations and we urge you to support their recommendations on child care funding.

Bringing an end to the child care crisis is fiscally responsible, makes Vermont a more affordable and livable place, and most importantly, allows all of Vermont's youngest children to thrive. When we fully invest in a system that is affordable for families and pays early childhood educators fairly, access and quality will increase, young families will be able to stay in Vermont and relocate here, Vermont's working families will be better supported, and employers will be able to find and retain staff. This is a win-win for everyone. Thank you again for your attention to this critical matter.